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WP 4 REPORT

SDGs Laboratory Learning Journey

With the support of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

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WP 4 REPORT - SDGs Laboratory Learning Journey

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SUMMARY

The *SDGs Labs - Making the SDGs Our Business* project is run by eight European partners from four countries (Austria, Germany, Italy and Portugal), and involves Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), companies and other stakeholders. It aims to integrate the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the business practices of the agribusiness and food production sector. To achieve this, the SDGs Labs project seeks to translate the SDGs into day-to-day business practices, through the use of innovative co-learning and co-creation environments. The agribusiness and food production sector faces increasing sustainability challenges; meanwhile, it has high potential to contribute to the SDGs, and therefore there is a need to highlight the potential of the SDGs and how to implement them. The aim of the SDGs Labs is hence to provide business opportunities and support innovation in the sector.

This report, *SDGs Laboratory Learning Journey*, describes the experience gained from designing, planning, implementing and evaluating SDGs laboratories, namely "SDGs Innovation Labs" (ILs) and "SDGs Co-Learning Labs" (CLLs), in different pilot regions between January 2020 and June 2021, covering the experience of lab participants, lab facilitators and lab organisers. The report therefore has two aims: on the one hand, it describes and assesses the experiences of facilitators and participants, analysing what they have learned from the labs; and on the other, it aims to provide guidance, describing these learning journeys and giving practical insights into the material used and the organisation of both lab formats, with different stakeholders from companies, start-ups and other organisations from the agribusiness and food production sector and HEIs.

The evaluation of the labs has shown that the workshop series are useful in providing learning environments for companies, HEIs and other stakeholders. As all labs varied largely to account for the regions' different participant groups and sustainability challenges in the sector, no single approach to the SDGs and SDGs laboratories can be suggested for similar future learning environments. Yet, it is one of the key insights of the project that these specifics ought to be considered well when designing labs.

Depending on how the ILs were designed, they enabled participants to engage more intensively with the SDGs for the first time (e.g. awareness raising, capacity building), or to take a fresh look at already familiar corporate sustainability challenges from the perspective of the SDGs. CLLs succeeded in bringing together stakeholders from different parts of the sector who would otherwise not have met, creating an atmosphere of open exchange and enabling changes of perspective. While achieving the SDGs is urgent, by the time of the evaluation, it is still too early to see long-term impacts of the labs. Yet, it is already apparent that at least some of the CLLs have sparked new regional collaborations between actors in the sector.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. THE PROJECT SDGS LABS – MAKING THE SDGS OUR BUSINESS

The *SDGs Labs – Making the SDGs Our Business* project is an Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliance, linking eight partners from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), companies and NGOs:

- Vienna University for Economics and Business (project coordinator), Austria
- University of Vechta, Germany
- Universidade de Trás-os-Montes de Alto Douro, Portugal
- Terra Institute, Italy
- ISEKI Food Association, Austria
- Wiesenhof, Germany
- CEIFAcoop, Portugal
- Regia – Douro Park, Portugal

The project aims to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the business practices of the agribusiness and food production sector. To achieve this, the project seeks to translate the SDGs into day-to-day business practices, ideally enabling the SDGs to provide business opportunities while also supporting innovation in the sector. Linked to this, co-learning and co-creation play an important role, as the project aims to build a culture of collaboration and knowledge exchange between companies, HEIs, non-profit organisations and other stakeholders.

The United Nations adopted its Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the 17 associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 (UN, 2015), to address the challenges of sustainable development. Because of their comprehensive nature, the implementation of the SDGs requires far-reaching changes in all sectors of the economy. This project has been implemented against the background of increasing sustainability challenges to the agribusiness and food production sector and the high importance and potential of this sector to contribute to the SDGs. The project also aims to contribute to the search for appropriate methods and tools for businesses to use to address the SDGs. Innovative educational formats ('labs' and 'academy') have also been developed to test promising methods and tools and to make further adjustments as necessary.

The agribusiness and food production sector faces a multiplicity of sustainability challenges that vary widely across different regions, products, production systems and stages of the value chain. In addition to the growing scarcity of basic resources such as water, land, soil and the loss of biodiversity "agriculture both contributes to climate change and is affected by climate change" (Böll Foundation et al., 2019: 62). In relation to other sustainability issues, the challenges for the agribusiness and food production sector likewise encompass both challenges to which the sector contributes, and challenges that the sector faces. Overall, the European agribusiness and food production sector is facing an uncertain future and multidimensional challenges (Ernst & Young GmbH 2019: 12-13). Moreover, changed expectations of agriculture, increased criticism from society (e.g. Thünen Institute, 2019; Christoph-Schulz et al., 2018) and a lack of trust in the food sector (IPES Food, 2019) all add to the pressure for rapid

adaptation. Such concerns are voiced against the background of projections of continued growth in the global population, which will result in increased demand for food (FAO, 2017).

At the same time, the agribusiness and food production sector is connected with numerous SDGs, as it is predicted to deliver more than a quarter of the 169 targets associated with the SDGs (Alphabeta 2016:9). The SDGs must therefore be achieved and complex global problems addressed as a matter of urgency, and "transformative change [...] is necessary" (UN Environment, 2019: 18). Numerous calls are being made for the transformation of agriculture; however, a wide variety of approaches to change and solutions are under discussion (McNeil, 2019; Béné et al., 2019).

Corporate social responsibility and sustainable business practices in the agricultural context (FAO, 2017) require the incorporation of sustainability into all processing steps – from field to plate at local, regional and international level (cp. FAO, 2017). However, current studies indicate that while a high proportion of businesses (71%) are planning to engage with the SDGs, they are finding it more difficult to "embed the SDGs into strategy" (planned by 41% within five years); in particular, tools to assess companies' impact on the SDGs are much less widespread (13%) (PWC, 2015: 1).

Since the beginning of the project in January 2019 and the report on the first work package (M12 in 2019), discussions in the political, scientific and societal sphere, and business activities, have moved forward. Initiatives include the European Green Deal (European Commission, 2019), one of the European Commission's six priorities for 2019-2024, and the EU biodiversity strategy 2030 (European Commission, May 2020), which is part of the European Green Deal. The renewal of the EU Common Agricultural Policy framework (planned for 2023-2027, cp. European Commission, no date), and increasing political pressure to achieve climate goals have influenced politics and debates as well as company strategies (e.g. net zero carbon food products).

Another important influence during the working period of WP4 (January 2020-June 2021) was the COVID-19-pandemic. This affected the pilot regions' agriculture and food production sectors in various ways (e.g. lack of tourism, working conditions in slaughterhouses, dependence on harvest workers from abroad).

1.2. BACKGROUND TO WP4 WITHIN THE SDGS LABS PROJECT

WP4, *SDGs Co-Learning Labs and Innovation Labs* (January 2020-June 2021), is one of the main work packages implementing the project. It is experimental in character, by opening and providing learning spaces. These aim to enable and support SDG-based innovation and transformation in the agribusiness and food production sector and formats for collaborative learning between companies and HEIs.

Subsequent to WP1 (*Common Knowledge Base & Needs Analysis*), which created a common knowledge base through desktop and empirical research, and WP3 (*Methods: Translation Framework and Transdisciplinary Learning Environments*), which focused on methods for the labs, WP4 focuses on the detailed planning, practical implementation, and evaluation of *SDGs Innovation Labs* and *SDGs Co-Learning Labs* with different types of company and a variety of actors drawn from agribusiness and food production in all pilot regions. SDGs Innovation Labs (ILs) are multiple learning spaces for pioneer enterprises from the agribusiness and food production sector and aim to test methods and tools for facilitating innovation and transformation in such enterprises. SDGs Co-Learning Labs (CLLs) can be seen as collaborative learning formats between companies, other agribusiness and food production sector stakeholders, and HEIs.

Innovation plays a crucial role in sustainable development, as a shift towards sustainability

requires more than merely incremental adjustments, but rather calls for disruptive changes in mindsets, behaviours and (business) performance. In this regard, start-ups are seen as promising drivers for sustainable development, due to the high probability that they will bring forward disruptive and breakthrough innovations (cf. Bergset & Fichter, 2015; Dyllick & Muff, 2016; Hockerts & Wüstenhagen, 2010; Iyigün, 2015; Mindt & Rieckmann, 2017; Schaefer et al., 2015; Scharbert & Stagl, 2014).

Developing creative approaches to the integration of the SDGs into the business practices of the agribusiness and food production sector also requires new forms of collaboration and co-learning in order to increase the transformative potential of individuals, the economy, and society as a whole. Co-learning aims to facilitate mutual exchange between different stakeholders and experts, to close the gap between academia and practice. Bringing together a variety of different mindsets, approaches and perspectives enables problems to be addressed and solved in a transdisciplinary setting and allows new and innovative ideas and solutions to emerge (Hall et al., 2015; Pettibone et al., 2018; Scholz, 2020).

The idea of the labs is to create settings and formats that allow for such innovation and co-learning.

WP4 TASKS AND MAIN ANTICIPATED RESULTS

Task 4.1: Preparation of the SDGs Labs focused on the preparation two formats, SDGs Innovation Labs and SDGs Co-Learning Labs, by a core group of the consortium, building on methods that the project had already tested (WP3) and identified as well-suited to the support of innovative and transformative learning processes (see chapter 2).

Task 4.2: Four European SDGs Innovation Labs (D4.1) comprised the organisation and facilitation of at least one Innovation Lab in each pilot region. These were conducted in so-called “pioneer companies”, who were motivated and willing to work with the SDGs to implement them throughout their organisation (see chapter 4).

Task 4.3: Four European SDGs Co-Learning Labs (D4.2) comprised the organisation and facilitation of at least one Co-Learning Lab in each project region, bringing together HEI representatives, start-up hubs, companies and their innovation ecosystems and related stakeholders (see chapter 5).

Task 4.4: Assessment of SDGs Innovation Labs and SDGs Co-Learning Labs covers the assessment of the outcomes of ILs and CLLs, involving reflection on the learning of all partners (see chapters 4 & 5).

1.3. AIM OF THE REPORT

SDGs Laboratory Learning Journey is a report on the experience of designing, planning, implementing, and evaluating SDGs laboratories, namely SDGs Innovation Labs and SDGs Co-Learning Labs, in the pilot regions. It encompasses the experience of lab participants, lab facilitators and organisers.

This report therefore has two aims, a) to assess the experience of participants from different target groups and of lab facilitators and organisers (assessment report) and b) to share the experience of the “experimental character” of these laboratories and the “learning spaces” they provided to the project’s target groups, and to create guidance for future SDG-related co-learning and innovation labs. Hence, the experience gained in this work package will not only be relevant to the ongoing and upcoming work of the current project and in the consortium beyond the lifetime of the project. Since it makes practical details and learning points publicly available, it can also be used to develop future learning spaces for SDG-based innovation and transformation in the agribusiness and food production sector and for collaborative learning formats between companies and HEIs.

1.4. STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is structured as follows: Chapter 2 describes the steps and activities undertaken to prepare the SDGs laboratories, which are at the centre of this work package. Chapter 3 explains how the evaluation and assessment of the SDGs laboratories was organized, including the different methods chosen for evaluation and the methods used to assess the evaluation data gathered. Chapter 4 provides insights into the SDGs Innovation Labs (ILs), the lab format within single enterprises, and draws learning points from their organisation, including the assessment of participants' and facilitators' evaluations from all regions. Likewise, chapter 5 explains the organisation of the second format, SDGs Co-Learning Labs (CLLs), and identifies learning points. Finally, chapter 6 draws overall conclusions and learning points from WP4. It compiles learning points of interest to the different target groups addressed in this report, namely companies and entrepreneurs from the agribusiness and food production sector, and for HEI stakeholders working in the field of innovation and co-learning in the sector with regard to the SDGs.

2. PREPARATION OF SDGs LABORATORIES

Comparatively few tasks and deliverables were determined in advance for WP4. Therefore, the activities involved with preparing the design and implementation of the SDGs laboratories were developed over the lifetime of the WP and were adapted depending on need and questions that arose. The activities included several regular meetings of a core group of consortium partners. The start of this work package was supported by two workshops that helped to clarify the aims of the WP, to agree common aims and to identify resources within the group as well as any open questions. The workshops took place on March 9-10, 2020 (online workshop to kick-off WP4) and May 25-27, 2020. The latter was originally planned as a face-to-face meeting in Vila Real, Portugal, and included 1.5 days dedicated to WP4; however, this had to be converted into an online meeting due to the situation with the pandemic.

2.1. CORE GROUP

A WP4 core group of consortium partners was established to design and prepare the SDGs laboratories. The group comprised the WP leader (P2 University of Vechta), P3 Terra Institute and P4 CEIFA Coop, and was also supported by WU, Iseki, UTAD and RegiaDouro. Hence, all partners that were themselves organising and facilitating ILs and CLLs were included in the joint lab design process and could profit from each other's experience.

The core group contributed to the WP by developing what was subsequently known as the "Concept of SDGs Innovation Labs and SDGs Co-Learning Labs", which included a shared understanding of the different lab formats, aims, outline, participants and methodological approach. The core group also organised a capacity building series, consisting of seven workshops to develop the capacities of the consortium to facilitate labs and to enhance the exchange of knowledge, experience and methods within the consortium (see 2.3).

2.2. CONCEPT OF SDGS INNOVATION AND CO-LEARNING LABS

The *Concept of SDGs Innovation and Co-Learning Labs* is a document developed jointly by all members of the core group. It includes a shared understanding of the different lab formats, aims, outline, participants and methodological approach. As agreed in the workshop on March 9-10, 2020, the labs in different regions all follow the same approach for all partners. But since the local context and conditions may differ between regions, the methods deployed in the different labs may vary and the common approach outlined below will need to be adapted.

2.2.1. SDGS INNOVATION LABS

An SDGs Innovation Lab (IL) consists of several (2-4) workshops (possibly including online meetings). The target group for ILs is "*pioneer companies*", with a range of participants attending from a single company. "Labs" are an innovative and

experimental approach, and the "pioneer companies" to which they are suited are companies that already have some experience of working with the SDGs and are willing to innovate and be inspired by the SDGs. The idea was to involve departments that have decision-making power in relation to internal processes and the implementation of SDGs.

To foster innovation, it was important to apply innovative methods. In the context of such an innovative approach it was important to include less analytical and structured elements, because innovative ideas can be fostered through methods that embrace creativity and the emotions. This is especially relevant, as the SDGs can appear very abstract to participants, especially when working with them and if they are new to them. Innovation can be drawn in particular from a holistic view of the SDGs and from the consideration of new topics. Consequently, the ILs addressed not only the "low-hanging fruit" but also several (or even all) SDGs. However, at the same time prioritisation was necessary, because not all of the 17 goals can be tackled at the same time and they may not all be equally relevant to individual companies.

2.2.2. SDGS CO-LEARNING LABS

It was planned to conduct at least one SDGs Co-Learning Lab (CLL) in each pilot region, aiming to prompt innovation and transformation processes and to facilitate long-term collaboration and knowledge exchange between business and academia, tackling common problems and opportunities related to the application of the SDGs in the agribusiness and food production sector. The CLL target groups were HEIs, start-up hubs, companies and their innovation ecosystems and related stakeholders (such as customers, suppliers, intermediaries). Building on insights from WP1, *non-company participants* (e.g. from politics and civil society) were also invited.

The aim of the CLLs was to generate new ideas for innovation by drawing on the different perspectives of heterogeneous participants. Co-learning is a way of learning with and from each other on an equal footing, where everyone benefits, or at least should be able to benefit, though obviously everyone will take different, individual learning points away from their participation. As far as the relationship between company and non-company stakeholders in the labs was concerned, widening the horizon, bringing in new perspectives and representing the demands of a wider group of societal stakeholders allows non-company participants to stimulate, support and encourage the process of business innovation.

As the CLLs aimed to bring together diverse target groups, it was necessary to ensure that all participants could contribute during the labs and feel comfortable speaking up. It was therefore important to be aware of and seek information on possible power imbalances and dependencies during the preparation phase for the labs. Like all learning processes, the labs are composed of different phases in terms of a) group dynamics, and b) content. Both aspects needed to be considered when choosing appropriate methods. One CLL consisted of (at least) two half-day workshops. For the detailed concept, see the online annex.

2.3. CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building comprised a series of workshops established by WP4 leaders (P2 University of Vechta) to boost the capacity of consortium members to organise and facilitate ILs and CLLs. It consisted of seven online workshops (Table 1). Each event was evaluated by WP6 leaders (P4 CEIFAcoop) and the results were fed into WP6.

No.	Date (CET)	Topic	Facilitators
1	Tuesday, 28.7., 13-17h	Learning to think the future - possible applications of the Future Workshop method in SDGs Labs	Prof. Dr. Marco Rieckmann, University of Vechta
2	Tuesday, 28.7. 10-11.30h	Utopian thinking and Walt Disney method	Hannah Frost, WU
3	Wednesday, 30.9., 12-14h	Group Dynamics and Team Facilitation	Lukas Scherak, University of Vechta
4	Wednesday, 30.9., 15-17h, and Thursday 1.10., 11-14h	Design thinking	Hannah Frost & Danijela Grubnic, WU
5	Thursday,15.10., 10-12h	Labs as Online Events (Plan B)	Larissa Jaeger, Prof. Dr. Marco Rieckmann, Lukas Scherak, University of Vechta
6	Tuesday, 20.10. 10-12h	SDGs methods	Johanna Bernhardt & Tanya Deporta, Terra Institute
7	Monday, 16.11., 9.00-12.30h	Scenario building	Dr. Simon Burandt, Leuphana University of Lüneburg, Germany

Table 1: WP4 Capacity Building series

2.4. KEY INSIGHTS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LABS

The pandemic situation in autumn/winter 2020/21 meant that almost all labs – in contrast to the original plans – had to take place online, and it was necessary to adapt the workshops. The most important learning points included the need for flexibility in adapting methods and content to the online environment. The first requirement was that online video conferencing tools and other communication tools had to be convenient both for facilitators and for participants. Methods also had to be adapted where especially creative and interactive approaches were involved, in order to ensure that the aims of the formats would still be achieved in the online environment.

Further learning points from the preparation phase for ILs were that it is important to adapt to the company's needs to make participation in an IL attractive to them and to make the benefits evident. Therefore, no one fixed concept was applied to all regions; the ILs were adapted to the requirements in the different regions. For the CLLs, in some regions follow-up activities had already been envisioned in the planning phase. For both lab formats, a common evaluation approach was developed with questions that were suitable for all regions, despite the differences in the methods used in the labs, the focus on different SDGs or sustainability challenges and the different company structures in the various pilot regions.

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3. APPROACH TO THE EVALUATION OF LABS

The evaluation of labs was based on the idea that it was necessary to assess the learning and experiences of participants and facilitators with both lab formats across all pilot regions. To this end, a range of evaluation tools and formats were combined. The learning experience was evaluated in the course of the labs to enable immediate responses and continuous adaptation to participants' needs. Likewise, the experience in different regions was compared by using the same questionnaires in all regions. The evaluation of the labs is strongly linked to the evaluation work package (WP7), which made a significant contribution to the development of evaluation methods and to the analysis of quantitative data. As the labs provided important moments of interaction and cooperation with external parties, namely IL and CLL participants, it was important to get their perspectives on the work of the project, and especially on the labs as innovation and co-learning formats. The evaluation methods (Table 2) were developed and jointly agreed within the consortium.

Three different questionnaires were sent to participants in the ILs and CLLs. The participant questionnaires were translated into German and Portuguese, and set up as Google surveys, to which links were sent to participants by the facilitators of the relevant labs in their regions[1].

The first questionnaire (prior to labs) was identical for ILs and CLLs despite the different types of organisation involved, and included questions on

- familiarity with sustainability
- familiarity with the SDGs
- motivation to participate in the labs and what participants expected to take away; data on the type of organisation, the stage of the value chain their organisation represented and the department they worked in.

Lab participants from all regions	Lab facilitators from all regions
Questionnaire with closed and open questions (online survey), standardised: • Prior to the lab • After workshop 1 • After workshop 2 (if more than 2 workshops) • After all workshops	Notes kept of all lab workshops Questionnaires with closed and open questions (online survey) after all lab workshops Focus group (including a shared session with all facilitators, and a specific session for ILs and CLLs)

Table 2: Evaluation methods used for both lab formats

1 Participants in the CLL in South Portugal were sent the pre-questionnaire in English and in Word format, as the translated Google survey was not yet ready. The participants in the IL in Germany were sent the (translated) pre-questionnaire in Word format as this was expected to increase the response rate due to internal procedures to prepare participants for this lab.

A short questionnaire after each lab workshop, included questions on

- Workshop organisation (general organisation, duration),
- Knowledge exchange with other participants, and group size,
- Whether expectations of the workshop were met.

Open questions were asked on:

- Aspects they had found especially interesting,
- Suggestions for the next workshop.

The questionnaire completed after all lab workshops included questions on

- The general organisation of the workshops,
- Workshop topics (including questions on sustainability related challenges: sustainability challenges for the company for the ILs, and challenges defined jointly with all participants for the CLLs),
- 'Exchange between participants and networking' supplemented facilitators' views on exchanges among the participants,
- 'Personal data' asked about participants' organisation type, stage of the value chain/ sector and department worked in, and role in the organisation.

The questionnaires for facilitators included questions organised into five thematic areas:

- General organisation of the workshops,
- Participant engagement and exchange,
- Methods used in the workshops, including customised material and methods used, approaches applied to work with the SDGs and an evaluation of this approach,
- Organisation in their team,
- Ideas for improvement and follow-up, and
- Data on their affiliation and role in the workshops.

Beyond this, a "note keeping document" was used as a simplified observation sheet. All lab facilitators were asked to make notes of important observations during the labs or directly afterwards.

A focus group with 13 lab facilitators from all five pilot regions was organised after all labs had been finalised (on March 30, 2021). This focus group was additional to the questionnaires and note keeping, and aimed to deepen insights into learning about the approaches chosen to implement the SDGs, with the support of co-learning and initiation of innovation in the different lab settings.

The evaluation data collected was subjected both to quantitative and to qualitative analysis. A more in-depth description of the evaluation and assessment methods can be found in the online annex.

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4. LEARNING POINTS FROM SDGs INNOVATION LABS

As it is the aim of this report to describe the learning journey of participants in and facilitators of ILs and to assess their experience, an overview of the activities undertaken in the labs, as well as insights from participants and facilitators are set out below.

4.1. PARTICIPANT MOTIVATION AND KNOWLEDGE PRIOR TO THE LABS

Before the start of the ILs, short questionnaires were sent to participants. These aimed to give facilitators an insight into the specific motivation and interest of their prospective participants, and to allow facilitators to prepare for participants' prior knowledge, deal with their expectations and adapt workshops where necessary.

asked about how familiar they were with 1) sustainability (4-level Likert-scale ranging from 1="I haven't heard of it." to 4="Sustainability is already a part of my work.") and 2) with the SDGs (4-level Likert-scale ranging from 1="I haven't heard of them." to 4 ="I already work with them."). While most IL participants were already familiar with the SDGs prior to the lab (25 persons answered 3 or 4), 7 (of 36) participants reported no previous knowledge, and the average value was 2.9. Familiarity with the SDGs was 2.44 on average, hence slightly lower than for sustainability, with only 4 participants reporting that they already worked with them. Levels of prior knowledge varied between regions[2], and by the composition of participants, e.g. their roles in the company.

Prospective participants were also asked about

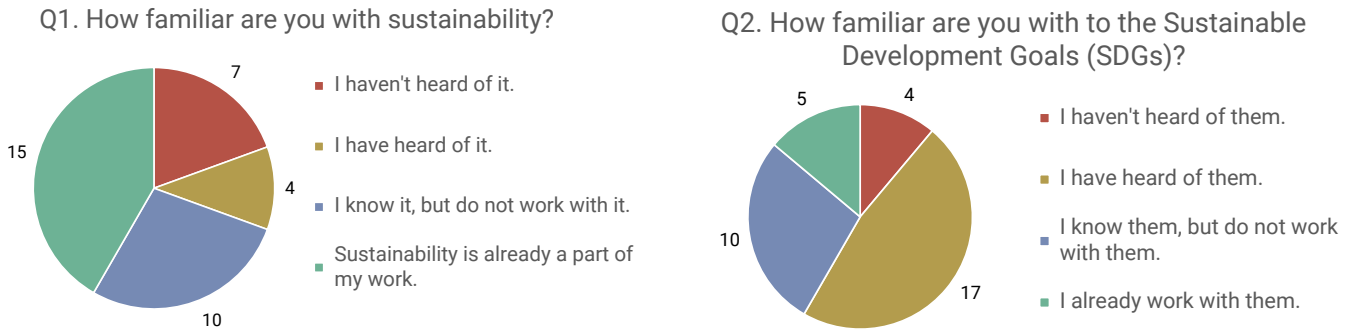

Figure 1: Responses of IL participants from all regions on prior knowledge of sustainability and the SDGs before the start of the labs.

In the questionnaire *before* the start of the ILs (answers from all regions n=36), participants were asked about their motivation (drop-down list, including option for "other") and were asked "What would

2 Average prior knowledge of sustainability reported, by region: Vienna: 4, Vechta: 2,78, South Tyrol: 2,86, North Portugal: 2,67, South Portugal: 3,5. Average prior knowledge of the SDGs reported, by region: Vienna: 2,33, Vechta: 2,44, South Tyrol: 3,00, North Portugal: 1,67, South Portugal: 3,00

you like to take away from the workshop?" The most common response (9 replies) expressed interest in learning about specific approaches for implementing the SDGs in their own work or company. Equally popular (9 replies) was acquiring knowledge about the goals and getting input on that topic. Participants from the Vechta region in particular cited an interest in personal contributions to sustainability in everyday life (7 out of 18 participants from this region). This might have been related to the task of calculating their personal ecological footprint that was distributed for preparation before the lab, to serve as a starting point for a discussion. Several participants said they were looking for ideas and inspiration for further activities and processes. Interest in learning about other participants' perspectives and experience was cited only three times, and teambuilding only once.

Details relating to average prior knowledge and the diversity of companies showed that the ILs in the pilot regions addressed a variety of companies and participants. Labs needed to find approaches to suit their interests and background. However, pre-evaluation also revealed that participants were generally highly motivated to join the learning journey.

4.2. IMPLEMENTATION OF SDGS INNOVATION LABS

Between November 2020 and February 2021, four ILs were implemented in the different pilot regions. An additional IL was implemented in Northern Portugal in March 2021, making a total of five ILs.

As envisaged in the Concept of SDGs Innovation and Co-Learning Labs, a diverse range of pioneer companies were recruited to participate in these innovation formats, differing in terms of size (from about 26 to more than 6000 employees), company type (start-ups, small family-run businesses, cooperatives and big enterprise), and agribusiness and food production sectors; they also had varying experience of the SDGs and with sustainability. This provided the opportunity to draw on a variety of learning journeys that would be of interest for different target groups. Details of the companies that cooperated with the implementation of the ILs are provided in the company profiles (see Annex).

Although ILs were based around a common approach, as outlined in the Concept of SDGs Innovation and Co-Learning Labs (cp. 2.2), they still needed to adapt the methods and tools they used in order to reflect the different participants involved, the profiles of the companies, and the aims and desired outcomes that had motivated them to participate in these experimental formats. All labs but one were held online due to the

Innovation Lab	Vienna VI	Vechta (Oldenburg Münsterland) VE	South Tyrol ST	North Portugal NP	South Portugal SP
dates	7.12.20, 14.12.20, 15.02.21	27.01.21, 5.02.21, 12.02.21	11.12.20, 26.02.21	11.03.21, 12.03.21	21.01.21, 3.02.21, 10.02.21
format	online	online	online	in person	online
participants	4/3/4	17/17/15	7/6	6/6/6	3/3
participating company	start-up / vegan restaurant and food provider	company that produces and markets poultry specialties	Family-run hotel	olive-oil producing company	support and services cooperative

Table 3: SDGs Innovation Labs

pandemic situation. This was a major organisational change, as it was the first time a number of the facilitators and many of the participants had been involved with online workshops that lasted several hours and used interactive methods and tools. The number of participants ranged from 3 to 17 individuals. Usually, as had been envisaged, the same individuals participated in all IL workshops, with only a few variations. Examples of IL workshop design including methods and tools used have been included in the Annex, and the designs of all lab workshops are available in the online annex.

Table 3 gives an overview of all ILs. Details of participating companies can be found in the company profiles in the Annex.

open questions. In total 20 questionnaires were filled out. Analyses were carried out in line with the methods described in chp.3.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

In order to present the (selected) results of descriptive statistics, the questions were divided into three groups: I. workshop organisation; II. knowledge about and work with the SDGs; and III. interaction between participants.[4]

Question Group I – Workshop organisation

Participants from all countries considered overall workshop organisation (issues such as timing or technical equipment) to be satisfactory (North Portugal (NP) and South Portugal (SP)) or very satisfactory (South Tyrol (Ty) and Vienna (Vi)) (see table). Other WS parameters that were analysed, namely duration, group size, meeting participants' expectations and contents (Qs 1,3,4[5]) were rated overall as good (NP and SP) or very good (Ty and Vi) by participants.

	Workshop Organisation				
	Organisation	Duration	Group size	Meeting expectations	Global
South Tyrol	4	4	4	4	4
Vienna	4	4	4	4	4
North Portugal	3.5	3	3	3	3
South Portugal	3	3	3	3	3
Vechta	3	3	4	3	3

Table 4: Summary of results from question group I of the SDGs Innovation Labs questionnaires. Results are presented as mean values of the answers provided by participants in the different ILs.

4.3. RESULTS OF IL EVALUATION ANALYSIS

4.3.1. ANALYSIS OF IL PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATION

IL participants' learning journeys were evaluated through analysis of their answers to questionnaires before and after the ILs. The analysis of IL participants' questionnaires after all workshops, composed of 18 questions (cp. online Annex), includes a statistical analysis of closed questions[3] and a qualitative analysis of selected

Question Group II – Knowledge about and work with the SDGs

The second group of questions aimed to assess how participants' relationship to the SDGs changed during the labs (Q6). It asked if the

3 Further results of statistical analysis, including cluster analysis, principal components analysis and multivariate and discriminant statistical analysis can be found in the online annex.

4 More comprehensive statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics, Cluster Analysis and Redundancy Components Analysis can be found in the online annex.

5 Question numbers according to questionnaire, cp. online annex.

workshops had helped to improve knowledge on the SDGs and associated targets, if participants had been familiarised with examples of their implementation in practice, if the workshops had provided insights into how to apply the goals in their companies or organisations, or if they had realised they were already applying (some) SDGs in their work. Participants were also asked if they thought the SDGs could help provide direction for the agribusiness and food production sector. In all countries surveyed, the results confirm that participants felt the IL allowed them to discuss the SDGs and their targets in a very effective way (very good for Ty, Vi, and SP, and good for NP). When asked about how well they felt the labs provided the opportunity to familiarise themselves with practical examples of implementing the SDGs into their daily business, only SP participants agreed strongly that they had. Participants from other regions 'agreed' that the IL had familiarised them with examples. This point should be taken into consideration in the preparation of future workshops, as it is likely that participants accord high importance to this parameter. Participants in all countries scored their ability to apply the SDGs in their daily businesses life as 3 – agreeing with the question. If one of the aims of the project and the WS is to familiarise participants with how to apply SDGs in their businesses, it is important to understand how this parameter can be improved. One important aim of the labs was to raise participants' awareness of the fact that they were already using and applying some or all of the SDGs. All participants agreed that they had learned about their application and expressed strong agreement that the SDGs provided direction for the agricultural and food sector.

Question Group III – Participant interaction

With regard to interactions between lab participants, it should be highlighted that the responses of partners on ILs and the "concept of IL and CLL" (cp. chp. 2.2) indicated that workshops should be developed in close collaboration with a business or start-up, in order to be appropriate to participants' backgrounds and expectations, and individual companies' aims with regard to the IL. Another important aspect is that ideally, participants should be drawn from different departments and types of jobs within companies. The survey included questions about the interest value and relevance of material, and the inspirational power of the WS, and interaction between participants. The results of the questionnaires were very similar for ILs in different regions. For all parameters, participants rated the quality of interaction, the interest value and relevance of the material, and the inspirational power of the WS, as very good.

One of the main conclusions from this analysis is that the preparation phase of this work package (Task 4.1, chp.2.), where the type and models of labs were thoroughly discussed and the methods

	Knowledge about and work with the SDGs				
	SDGs Knowledge	Examples of implementation	Able to apply SDGs	Already apply	SDGs as direction for the sector
South Tyrol	4	3	3	3.5	3.5
Vienna	4	3.5	3.5	4	4
North Portugal	3	3	3.5	3	3.5
South Portugal	4	4	3	3	4
Vechta	3.5	3.5	2.5	2.5	3.5

Table 5: Summary of results from question group II, presented as mean values of the answers provided by participants in the different ILs.

	Participants interlinkage				
	Interesting	Relevant	Inspiring	Interactive	Overwhelming
South Tyrol	4	4	3.5	3.5	2
Vienna	4	4	4	4	1.5
North Portugal	3.5	3	3.5	3	2
South Portugal	4	4	3	4	2
Vechta	3.5	2	2.5	3	1.5

Table 6: Summary of results from question group III, presented as mean values of the answers provided by participants in the different ILs.

to be used were chosen, building on the methods and insights arising from WP3, delivered very good outcomes. The results indicate that despite the difference in countries, types of companies, and prior knowledge about SDGs and their implementation, the potential of the ILs model is high.

REDUNDANT COMPONENTS ANALYSIS (RDA) OF SDGS INNOVATION LABS PARTICIPANTS

One of the aims of the learning journey is to understand which parts of the workshop need to be adapted to the types of stakeholder that will use the proposed format: HEIs, NGOs, Farmers' Associations, businesses and others. With this in mind, a Redundancy Discriminant Analysis (RDA) was conducted. This is a method for extracting and summarising the variation in a set of response variables that can be explained by a set of explanatory variables. Parameters analysed included the role of participants within their organisation (manager/leader, employee, or apprentice/ trainee), their department, the part of the sector and stage of the value chain their organisation represented, and their organisation's size. These characteristics were analysed to see if they provided explanation (i.e. were explanatory variables) for the differences between regions in the evaluation of the labs (e.g. participants' satisfaction with exchange and networking, the topics addressed in the workshop, or the general organisation of the workshops). The issues showing the greatest significant statistical differences are the characteristics of the workshops. Using these explanatory variables, the analysis shows separation by organisation size, with smaller organisations (<9 employees) being separate from larger ones. Differences also emerge for departments, with Management/Administration departments being separate from production, marketing, and other departments. Organisation type also had an impact on the results: associations were separated from cooperatives, enterprises and other types of organisations. These variables (on the vertical axis) are responsible for 68% of the variation on results.

The horizontal axis explains 55% of the variation and explains the importance given to the "sector" in Cluster Analysis. This factor separates Agriculture and Processing from Distribution and Services. It also separates the organisational role of participants. In brief, employees' evaluations of workshops differed from managers'. These differences should be taken into consideration when

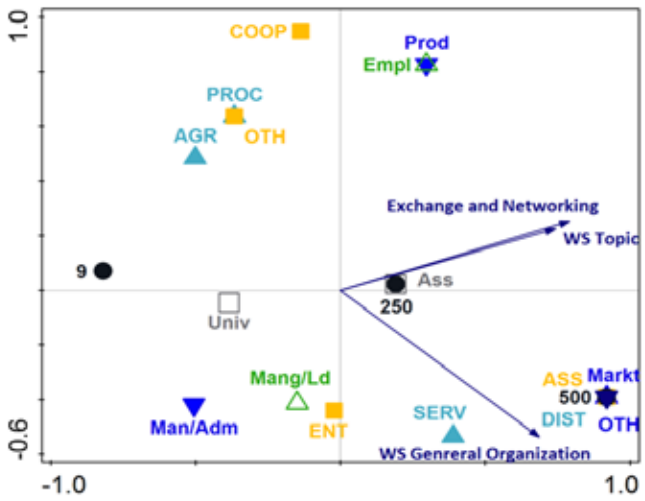

Figure 2 RDA for all parameters analysed in all WS.

organising content and identifying methodologies for ILs.

ANALYSIS OF OPEN QUESTIONS OF IL PARTICIPANTS' QUESTIONNAIRE AFTER ALL WORKSHOPS

To complement the quantitative analysis, selected open questions were analysed qualitatively, for getting insights on highlights of the labs reported by the participants (Q2.), ideas for improvement (Q3.), envisaged follow up activities to work with the SDGs after the end of the labs (Q7.), main takeaways from the discussion (Q9.) and benefits generated for the organisations by taking part in the labs (Q10.).

Regarding Q2. "When now looking at all workshops (all labs), which were in your opinion highlights?" (14 responses[6]) participants of one lab often gave similar responses – here obviously, the different foci and approaches in methods in the different labs become significant. While the great facilitation, tools used in the online lab and the impact on teambuilding were highlighted by VI participants, 3 of 4 NP participants welcomed the exchange of knowledge and opinions that occurred, and the development of sustainability assessment tool for technologies as a concrete output created in SP was appreciated by 2 of 3 respondents. As it is interesting for this work package, the SDGs were only named once in 14 responses, but work in small groups and in general insights into the topics of the labs each twice.

Only few ideas for improvement were mentioned. From 13 responses, six expressed no need for improvement or that everything was great, the seven remaining were minor suggestions, e.g. that the labs could be held at shorter intervals (with one month interval). Single participants suggested to increase the initial information for a better preparation, to create a "content library with great projects, best practices and inspiration" (ILa102) and one participant urged for "addressing burning issues in a more targeted way" (ILa303).

Asked for main takeaways from the discussion with other participants (Q9, 14 responses), the sharing and learning about each other ideas was responded most frequently (6), while one participant recognised the similarity of their visions. Three individuals (from VI and ST) described that an output could be taken away from the IL: concrete proposals for implementation and that a realistic output was generated. Other respondents (5) described more global insights on the implementation of sustainability, e.g. to involve the staff in their organisation more in this, that great effort from society and stakeholders is needed to achieve the SDGs and the path of "recognising-planning-implementing" as a take away. These answers appear slightly contrasting to the responses of the ideas for follow-up activities for working with the SDGs described below (Q7).

Enquired on what benefits arose from the participation according to their perspective (Q10, 14 responses), several (5) participants described specific impulses they gained on how to apply the SDGs in their organisation, more generally, ideas for innovation in the future or saw it the IL an opportunity to question „the whole thing" (likely implying, the way their organisation relates to the global goals). Three reported knowledge gained as a major benefit, while three other individuals referred to more specific outcomes, like accelerating the implementation process and the formulation of a clear sustainability strategy that was achieved. Regarding the atmosphere, three others mentioned the labs as supportive for freely exchanging ideas and for team building.

As the translation into the day-to-day business was a core intention of this work package, the insights into the question on whether participants have any ideas on follow-up activities for working with the SDGs (Q7, 13 responses) was of high interest for the evaluation of the labs. Five participants stated to have no ideas. In the questionnaire only two individuals named concrete

6 Quotes were translated into English by the authors and are assigned with index numbers per individual.

ideas namely, the introduction of an electric car within one year, and awareness raising activities for already implemented practices. Other answers were confirming that the elaboration of the SDGs was useful and a good guideline, or that there are many ideas without specifying them. At this point, it appears interesting that the responses of the consequently analysed questions Q9 and Q10 on main takeaways and benefits do in several cases point to more concrete follow-up sustainability activities. However, it is remarkable that IL participants at this point did not necessarily consider them as a contribution to the SDGs. It seems also worth noting the perspective of IL facilitators, pointing out that outcomes of a lab might show more clearly after a longer period after the labs.

4.3.2. ANALYSIS OF IL FACILITATORS' EVALUATION

In addition to participants' evaluation, an evaluation of IL facilitators' experience and learning was conducted, as the aim of this work package was to figure out which methods and approaches are suited to working with SDGs in a corporate context, translating them into the business environment and promoting innovation.

As described in chapter 3, facilitators evaluated ILs on the basis of a questionnaire that included closed questions (using a 4-level Likert-scale) and open questions, and was completed after all labs had been concluded. A focus group was also held with facilitators of all labs to promote in depth discussion, and "note keeping" documents recording major observations during each workshop, complementing later overall observations, were also taken into account. The key findings from these data are presented below.

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

Evaluation of the questionnaire completed by IL facilitators was undertaken by n= 12 individuals. Three organisations (RegiaDouro, Terra, Uni Vechta) were represented by three persons each,

Workshop Organisation				
Organisation	Duration	How WS took place	Online tool	Clarifications and online tool
4 (3-4)	3 (2-3)	1 (1-3)	4 (3-4)	4 (2-4)
Discussion among participants				
Suiting to the questions	Relevant for the topic	Interesting to other participants	Stimulating new ideas	Pointing to further relevant questions
3 (2-4)	3.5 (3-4)	3 (2-4)	3 (3-4)	3 (2-4)
Engagement of participants and knowledge exchange				
Group size WS1	Group size WS2	Participants engagement	Diversity of participants	Knowledge exchange
3 (2-3)	3 (2-3)	3.5 (3-4)	3 (1-3)	3 (2-4)

Table 7: Summary of results of questionnaires provided by IL facilitators from all regions, presented as mean values. Minimum and maximum values observed are displayed in parentheses.

and three organisations (WU, Iseki, CEIFACoop) were represented by one person.[7, 8]

With regard to workshop organisation, a crucial change to the initial concept was that all ILs but one had to take place online. Despite this being the first experience for all facilitators with conducting workshops as exclusively online formats over several days (and for many it was also their first ever experience of conducting online workshops), overall evaluation of the experience was positive. Facilitators highlighted that detailed planning was required and that tasks needed to be divided within the team in order to ensure smooth processes. However, issues such as technical difficulties and participants not attending for the whole period mean that it is important to be prepared to adapt as ILs progress.

Quantitative analysis showed that according to the facilitators' point of view, the "workshop organisation", "the online tool" and "clarifications" were well received. The engagement of participants and thus knowledge exchange among participants was seen as either good or improvements can be made. The discussion among the participants was much "suited to the questions asked", also "relevant for the topic" and "interesting to other participants", "stimulating new ideas" and "pointing to further relevant questions". There was overall satisfaction with the methods used in the workshop. The aspects of "time management", "quality of ideas" and impact in participants' vision of the SDGs can be improved.

Qualitative analysis of open questions of questionnaires shows that facilitators' responses on what they considered most remarkable about the exchange and discussion between participants (Q8, 12 responses) can be divided into the following categories: open attitudes on the part of individuals and an open working atmosphere (listening to others' perspectives, ideas and experiences) (ILF018, ILF033, ILF072); ILs providing a useful setting to come up with and develop new ideas (ILF053, ILF072, ILF082) and to exchange knowledge on sustainability activities and challenges facing companies (ILF021, ILF033, ILF053, ILF117) and individuals (ILF117); and where there was sufficient time, the progression within the IL from isolated sustainability activities towards a broader perspective (ILF107, ILF094).

One crucial question for this work package, which was widely discussed in the preparation (see chp. 2.2) and in the questionnaire to IL facilitators (Q11, 11.1., 11.2) was how to work with the SDGs in the specific setting of the particular lab. It was important to find out whether it was helpful to focus on a specific issue to make the goals more tangible, and in that case whether the focus should be determined by participants or facilitators (Q12, 12.1., 12.2).

All five ILs identified very different thematic foci to address the SDGs in an educational format to suit their future participants. The approaches are outlined briefly below, to provide an overview of the ranges of options for addressing the SDGs with companies:

- Focus on working on an online platform, even though ultimately more central outcomes related to other sustainability activities over the forthcoming year. Approach used: „Dreaming - Doing - Reflecting" (over the three WS of the IL),
- Focus on selected SDGs (12 and 13, "Sustainable consumption and production" and "Climate action"), which were then applied to participants' work,
- Following an introduction providing a broader understanding of the goals, a tool for assessing the sustainability of new technologies was developed, as a practical way of applying the SDGs,

7 The survey was not completed by UTAD representatives, as in their region, SDGs Innovation Labs were facilitated by RegiaDouro and Co-learning Labs were facilitated by UTAD. Wiesenhof representatives did not fill out the facilitator questionnaire either, as the IL in Oldenburg Münsterland was organised at the Wiesenhof/PHW Group premises, and hence they undertook the evaluation as participants.

8 References in brackets refer to the index numbers assigned to all questionnaires submitted.

- In two pilot regions, there was no preselected focus. In one region, participant groups were asked to choose topics to work on, and to relate to the SDGs; in the other, the challenge of plastic waste and other pollutants emerged over the course of the lab.

Reasons for deciding on these approaches included involving participants and companies in the decision on the focus topic in order make them reflect on where they might have the biggest impact (ILF033); identifying a clear objective for the workshop (ILF018); and motivating participants and enabling them to generate new ideas (ILF072, ILF082). Others said their choice was based on the desire to work on something concrete and generate outcomes, and "to meet the need to bring sustainable innovations to the work carried out" in the organisation (ILF094).

With regard to the approach taken to SDGs (Q11-11.2), four labs chose to integrate all SDGs, and one worked with selected SDGs (12 & 13). However, all labs found specific ways of approaching the somewhat abstract goals and delivered on the aim of making them tangible for companies and possibly using them to stimulate innovation. One interesting point raised by several IL facilitators (ILF021, ILF033) was that they did not consider it feasible or productive to focus on all SDGs throughout the lab; another was where this was not done, more profound analysis would have been useful (ILF072). This seems to run counter to the aim of working on specific projects and developing concrete approaches to put them into practice in a business context. Different approaches were chosen to deal with this (dilemma): a) working only with selected SDGs ("We prioritised the SDGs together and as we wanted to initiate concrete projects in a short time, the focus on a few SDGs made sense." (ILF033), or b) working at first with all SDGs for an overview, and then focussing on selected ones (ILF043, ILF053), or c) working with the SDGs in an integrated way, but not focussing solely on them, instead relating more to sustainability in general (e.g. the organisation's internal vision, which was linked to sustainability and the organisation's impact in a broader way (ILF021)). "We didn't emphasise the SDGs too much, but when we did, it was beneficial and sparked new ideas and potential fields of action for the team" (ILF021).

Despite the different approaches chosen, all facilitators reported that they were very satisfied (7 answers) or satisfied with their approach (5 answers). This can be interpreted as indicating that there is no single preferred approach to the SDGs for all labs, but that the approach needs to be suitable for the participants and the aims of individual labs.

RESULTS OF FOCUS GROUP ANALYSIS

To gain deeper insight into the experience of the facilitators beyond the questionnaire, a focus group was held with facilitators of all labs after all labs had concluded (cp. chp. 3). The most key insights are summarized below.

In a first general session, facilitators reflected together on both lab formats. Even though this chapter addresses the learning journey made in ILs, as several insights from the focus group are significant for both formats they are hence illustrated in the following, without being repeated in chapter 5.

Facilitators were asked to reflect on what they had found most remarkable in the labs. Several facilitators referred to the methodologies used and the online format: **communication with participants before and during the labs, and the active participation despite labs taking place online, was seen as remarkable**. Facilitators also viewed the concrete ideas emerging from labs, participants' openness towards working with new SDG-based methods and their commitment to working with the SDGs as remarkable features of both lab formats. Finally, several facilitators mentioned the need for a follow-up meeting for both lab formats, to see how the ideas that emerged were developing. **On the question, "From your**

perspective, what were the most important outcomes of the labs you facilitated?", the outcomes described as being most important were **the fact that diverse participants worked together towards common goals**, exchanging ideas, and also the use of the format for networking. Other insights by IL facilitators included that companies had valued the SDGs Co-Learning Labs' co-creation process as a method of generating new ideas. They also pointed out that the use of visualisation tools in IL led to visible outputs of the labs. On the question about **how the SDGs were addressed** in both lab formats, **several different approaches were mentioned**. Video materials were used South Tyrol and Vienna, and facilitators of both types of lab in South Tyrol and Germany used the "SDGs Mingling" method, in which each participant is assigned one goal, asked to learn about it and then teach other participants. In Southern Portugal, facilitators organised a simple game, asking all participants to choose two or three SDGs and to relate these to the agri-food system. In the Co-Learning Lab in Vienna, participants were randomly assigned an SDG as ambassadors and asked to represent that perspective in the lab discussions.

In the dedicated small group discussion on the ILs, the seven participating facilitators were first asked to reflect on how the ILs sparked innovation. There was general agreement that the labs provided a space for free thinking and reflection, a space for sharing examples of best practice and successful projects to provide inspiration and prompt small steps towards innovation. Facilitators were then asked to reflect on the most important lesson learned from the labs in relation to sparking innovation and to identify the likely short- or long-term impact of the labs. **Here flexibility on the part of the facilitator in terms of being able to adapt to unexpected circumstances (i.e. fewer participants, different group composition) was mentioned as one of the lessons learned.** It was also highlighted that acceptance of what may appear to be small innovative steps can represent big progress for a company, and that there was a need to provide participants with concrete tools and specific recommendations on how to implement the SDGs.

4.4. INTERIM CONCLUSIONS

The ILs were very different from each other (e.g. in terms of composition, with many participants having comparatively little prior knowledge about sustainability, in contrast to a few very experienced participants in Vienna). Accordingly, the choice of methods was adapted to very different aims. Therefore, it is in general difficult to compare the different labs. Data might have allowed for deeper analyses of correlations between the evaluation of specific aspects and lab specifics, yet these would exceed the limitations of this report. However, the evaluations' analysis carried out enables some conclusions to be drawn about participants' and facilitators' learning journeys during the SDGs Innovation Labs (cp. chp. 4.3.2):

- During the labs, diverse participants were supported and encouraged to work together in unusual groups or on new tasks to open space for inspiration.
- The focus groups underlined a need to adapt labs to company needs (with regard to focus topics, approach to SDGs and the methods chosen). Communication beforehand and adaptation over the course of the labs is important to ensure this happens.
- It is necessary to adapt labs as they progress, to take account of unforeseen circumstances (e.g. unexpected changes in participants, online or in person format, ideas and needs expressed by participants).
- Innovations do not need to be technical; however, it might help to provide examples of social, non-technical innovations that address the SDGs to clarify participants' understanding and broaden their perspective.
- The methods applied to address innovation and the SDGs were highly varied, ranging

from working on a concrete task (online platform), using the approach of „dreaming - doing - reflecting“, to focussing on selected SDGs and developing an assessment tool, to working with topics selected by participants after a broader introduction to the SDGs.

- Specific topics vs. all SDGs: While relating the IL to specific challenges can make the format especially useful to companies, it remains the aim that labs will concern themselves with (more global) SDGs. A balance needs to be found here. If a strong inside-out perspective (taking the company's viewpoint) is adopted, it might initially appear difficult to integrate the SDGs.
- Visionary vs. concrete: While visionary phases and emotional components are important to generate motivation and to open up the space to innovative ideas and new approaches, it is also important to work on concrete challenges.

The RDA of IL participants showed that participants' evaluation can be explained (without statistical significance but nonetheless to a certain extent) by their role and tasks within companies, their organisation type and the sector in which they work. These differences should be considered when organising content and devising methodologies for ILs; methods and environments also need to be adapted to participants' needs.

The facilitators' evaluation (questionnaire) revealed that there is no one preferred approach to the SDGs for all labs, but that approaches need to be suitable for participants and the aims of individual labs. Facilitators were satisfied or very satisfied with their chosen approaches to the SDGs, and developed a variety of approaches to working with the SDGs in ILs, working with selected SDGs or with all the goals in an integrative way, generating ideas for concrete projects, or helping companies to undertake broader analysis for potential future activities.

5. LEARNING POINTS FROM SDGs CO-LEARNING LABS

Following the aim of this report to describe the learning journey of participants in and facilitators of CLLs and to assess their experience, like for undertaken for ILs, an overview of the activities undertaken in the labs, as well as insights from participants and facilitators are presented below.

5.1. PARTICIPANT'S MOTIVATION AND KNOWLEDGE PRIOR TO LABS

The questionnaire sent to participants before the start of the CLL aimed to give facilitators an insight into the specific motivations and interests of their prospective participants, and to enable them to prepare for participant's prior knowledge, to deal with their expectations and adapt workshops where necessary.

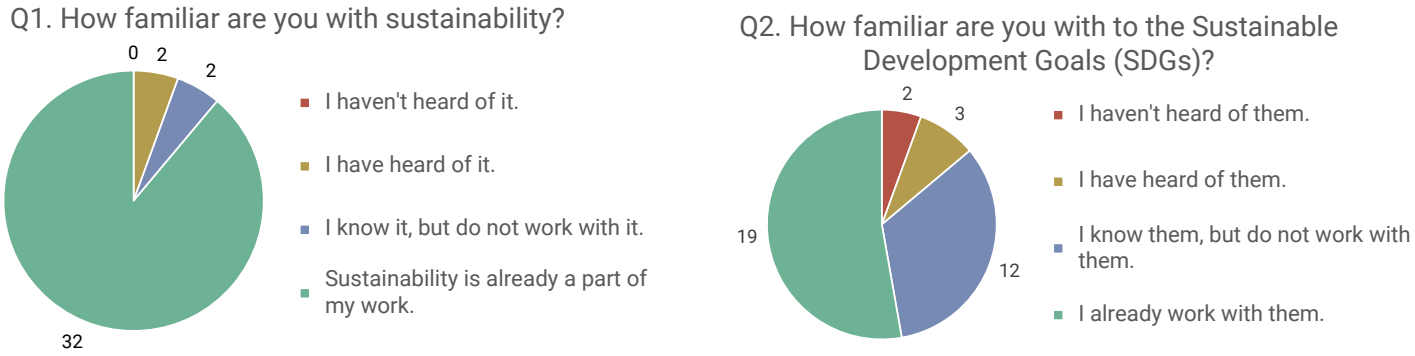

Figure 3: Responses of SDGs Co-Learning Labs participants from all regions on previous knowledge of sustainability and the SDGs before the start of the labs.

In the questionnaire before the CLL (answers n=57), participants were asked – as for SDGs Innovation Labs – how familiar they were with 1) sustainability (4-level Likert-scale from "I haven't heard of it." to "Sustainability is already a part of my work.") and 2) the sustainable development goals (4-level Likert-scale from "I haven't heard of them." to 4 "I already work with them."). These pre-questionnaires were subjected only to simplified analysis, as they were very short. CLLs participants reported overall that they had very high familiarity with sustainability (average = 3.8) and the SDGs (average=3.3). No individual reported that they had no knowledge whatsoever about sustainability, and only 2 participants reported not knowing about the SDGs before attending the labs, as illustrated in figure 3 below.[9]

The open question "What would you like to take away with you from the workshop?" was unfortunately only included in the questionnaires for

9 There were no obvious differences in regional averages for the question on prior knowledge of sustainability. For prior knowledge of the SDGs, it can be seen becoming familiar with the SGs was a stronger priority in ST than in other regions. VI average 3.82; VE average 3.33; ST average 2.80; NP average 3.47; SP average 3.60.

some of the regions, and others had the option of adding open answers to the listed motivations, resulting in only 23 answers from 57 questionnaire respondents. This of course affects the depth of insight provided by the answers. However, as the same question was posed to IL participants, it is interesting to note differences and similarities: Interest in "Exchange and networking", in line with facilitators' aims for the lab, was cited by 10 (out of 23 answers), sometimes accompanied by very concrete ideas, such as the wish to "find fellow campaigners" (CL102), future partnerships/ collaborations, and the sharing of experience with a diversity of stakeholders.

The second most frequently identified motivation was – as for the ILs – the desire for ideas on how to implement the SDGs in specific areas (9 responses). Specific interests expressed related to the role of e.g. renewable energy or "agriculture, digital innovation and rural development" when implementing the SDGs. One participant formulated the very concrete vision "To learn to make the SDGs a part of my day-to-day activity, i.e. to carry them out effortlessly." (CL417), another wanted to gain at least "1 idea for action" (CL408). An interest in learning and gaining new or deeper knowledge on application of the SDGs in the sector was also highlighted. However, no further detail was provided, so it can be assumed that participants were generally open to learning about the SDGs.

Overall, disregarding regional specificities, this showed that participants joining the CLLs had a high level of prior knowledge on sustainability, a high awareness of the SDGs, and were generally interested in sharing views with others on their experience of challenges and learning more about the SDGs, including their implementation in participants' diverse working environments.

5.2. IMPLEMENTATION OF SDGS CO-LEARNING LABS IN ALL PROJECT REGIONS

In parallel with the ILs, five CLLs were run in all project regions between December 2021 and February 2021. The CLLs brought together different stakeholders from the agribusiness and food production sector, ranging from start-up entrepreneurs to larger companies to representatives of associations or civil society to local or regional political actors. Group sizes ranged from seven to eighteen, all labs took the form of two workshops and were held online due to the pandemic situation. Table 8 gives an overview of all SDGs Co-Learning Labs.

Co-Learning Lab	Vienna VI	Vechta (Oldenburg Münsterland) VE	South Tyrol ST	North Portugal NP	South Portugal SP
dates	20.01.21, 21.01.21	9.02.21, 11.02.21	27.11.20, 3.12.20	22.01.21, 29.01.21	10.12.20 (morning and afternoon)
format	online	online	online	online	online
participants	13/13	7/8	18/14	16/16	10
participating company	initiating a food hub in Vienna, "Re:localisation"	WS 1: challenges of the sector, WS 2: implementation in own organisation	1. challenges of the sector as identified in WP1, 2. implementation in own organisation	challenges of the sector as identified in WP1	Selected SDGs 6, 8,17 relating to water shortages, working conditions and partnerships

Table 8: SDGs Co-Learning Labs

5.3. RESULTS OF CLL EVALUATION ANALYSIS

5.3.1. ANALYSIS OF CLL PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATION

This analysis of CLL participants' evaluation was undertaken to gain insights into the experience and learning journey of participants with CLL in all regions. Therefore questionnaires were sent to CLL participants after all workshops, encompassing 18 questions (cp. online annex). In total 49 questionnaires were completed in the 5 regions. The quantitative analysis of questionnaires comprised descriptive statistics, principal components analysis and multivariate and discriminant statistical analysis, in line with the methods described in chp.3.2. Selected open questions were analysed to supplement the insights into participants' learning journeys.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

In order to present the (selected) results of descriptive statistics, as for the results of CLL participants, the questions were divided into three groups: I. workshop organisation; II. knowledge about and work with the SDGs; and III. interaction between participants.[10]

QUESTIONS PART I – WORKSHOP ORGANISATION

Participants from all countries generally considered workshop organisation, namely human and physical resources, satisfactory or very satisfactory. There were no significant differences between countries' views on the duration of the workshops, group size, or workshop contents, which were overall rated satisfactory or very satisfactory. The overall opinion of the workshops and of meeting participants' expectations towards these revealed some differences between North Portugal (NP) and South Tyrol (Ty). These may be related to the previous knowledge of participants about the SDGs and the type of organisation they represent, as many participants in the NP group were connected with HEIs or R&D centres (8 out of 17 participants) while in ST the majority of participants came from the primary (agriculture and production) or secondary (processing) sectors (as shown in results of participants' questionnaires before the workshops and overview on CLL composition in the Annex).[11]

QUESTIONS PART II – KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AND WORK WITH THE SDGS

The second group of questions aimed to assess whether the CLL had helped to improve the participants' knowledge about the SDGs, and their relation to the goals, i.e. if labs had provided participants with new insights into how to apply the

	Workshop Organisation				
	Organisation	Duration	Group size	Meeting expectations	Global
South Tyrol	4	3	4	3	3
Vienna	4	4	4	3	3
North Portugal	4	4	4	4	4
South Portugal	4	4	4	4	4
Vechta	3	4	4	3	3

Table 9: Summary of results from question group I, presented as mean values of the answers provided by participants in the different CLLs.

10 More comprehensive statistical analyses including descriptive statistics, cluster analysis and Redundancy Components Analysis can be found on the project website.

11 The differences were statistically significant and results were confirmed through multivariate analysis, namely the cluster analysis and principal components analysis.

goals in their companies or organisations. Participants were also asked whether they thought the SDGs could provide direction for the agribusiness and food production sector. In all regions surveyed, the participants thought they could gain much to very much knowledge of the SDGs and sustainability concepts (table 9). Answers on the use and discussion of examples of practical implementation of SDGs in business revealed some differences. South Tyrol participants did not feel there was enough discussion about practical examples, while NP participants thought these had been properly discussed. These differences may be explained through a comparison of the methodologies used in the two workshops. Generally, participants felt that they learned about the concepts and were comfortable applying SDGs in their daily activities, or became aware that they were already applying them. Finally, all participants agreed or agreed strongly, that the SDGs provided direction for the agricultural and food value chains. These findings are of high importance for future workshops, as participants accord importance on these outcomes, as the motivation assessed prior to the CLLs showed.

QUESTIONS PART III – PARTICIPANT INTERACTION

This group of questions aimed to understand how participants felt about the co-learning environment and the interaction between participants. The survey asked more specifically sub-questions about how they rate their own interest in, relevance of, inspirational power and quality of the interaction within the participants group. Globally, participants from all regions rated the co-learning environment as good and very good. Significant differences were found only with regard to how relevant" they rated the interactions within the group, where NP participants accorded higher importance to this parameter than NP. Again, maybe methodologies used in the NP lab were more appropriate to their participants. It must also be taken into account that, as mentioned above, the type of participants varied between the two

	Knowledge about and work with the SDGs				
	SDGs Knowledge	Examples of implementation	Able to apply SDGs	Already apply	SDGs as direction for the sector
South Tyrol	3	3^{a}	3	3	3.5
Vienna	3	3^{ab}	3	3	4
North Portugal	3	4^{b}	4	3	4
South Portugal	4	3^{ab}	3	3	4
Vechta	3	4^{ab}	3	3	3

Table 10: Summary of results from question group II, presented as mean values of the answers provided by participants in the different CLLs. Different superscript letters represent significant differences among regions, according to participants' answers.

	Participants interaction				
	Interesting	Relevant	Inspiring	Interactive	Overwhelming
South Tyrol	4	3^{a}	4	4	1^{a}
Vienna	4	3^{ab}	3	4	1^{a}
North Portugal	4	4^{b}	4	4	1^{ab}
South Portugal	4	4^{ab}	4	4	3^{b}
Vechta	3	3^{ab}	3	3	1^{ab}

Table 11: Summary of results from question group III, presented as mean values of the answers provided by participants in the different CLLs. Different superscript letters represent significant differences among regions, according to participants' answers.

regions, and this may have influenced the results to some extent.

Summary of statistical analysis of responses from CLLs participants:

- one of the topics discussed in WS should take the SDGs into consideration and focus specifically on them, and even where there is prior knowledge, the importance of "remembering" the basic concepts should be recognized;
- small and homogeneous groups work less well than larger groups (at least larger than 10 participants);
- interaction between participants is highly valued; this is also a reflection of the heterogeneity and size of the group;
- the discussion of practical cases where the SDGs were applied was little explored in some labs and participants considered this to be important;
- the creation of new networks between participants and the potential for future collaborations were also highly valued.

ANALYSIS OF OPEN QUESTIONS OF CLL PARTICIPANTS' QUESTIONNAIRE AFTER ALL WORKSHOPS

As introduced above, selected open questions were analysed qualitatively to complement the quantitative analysis to gain insights on highlights of the labs reported by the participants (Q2.[12]), envisaged follow up activities after the end of the CLL (Q7.), main takeaways from the discussion (Q9.) and benefits generated for the participants' organisation by taking part in the labs (Q10).

Highlights named by CLL participants after the end of the labs (Q2) were most importantly the exchange with different stakeholders of the sector (31 responses). While some participants emphasised the sharing of knowledge and ideas, others appreciated getting to know other perspectives, and in some labs the possibility to identify for common challenges as well as finding solutions for them was in focus and highly welcomed (8 responses). Methods applied in the CLLs were frequently named as well (15 responses), methods highlighted in particular were the Walt Disney method, the work in small groups, world café and a design thinking process applied. About the atmosphere six individuals appreciated the active engagement of others and two answers an atmosphere that was relaxed and at eye-level.

Deeper insight on what matters for CLL participants about the exchange could be gained, when they were asked for their main takeaways from the discussion with other participants (Q9, 42 responses). This was linked for some participants to (4 responses) getting to know the situation in the own region better and getting to know the real problems of the sector/ region. Of course, the diversity of perspectives was named often as a response. To go more into detail, it is interesting that several participants expressed that despite the diversity of perspectives they share, some perspectives still overlap and common interest or challenges became evident (7 responses). Other reasons behind this were that a diversity of perspectives might provide new input, and help to get a more objective view, or simple foster network creation. Two participants realized ultimately, that "Sustainable development is facilitated through cooperation" (CLa203) and that implementing the SDGs effectively involves a multidisciplinary team (CLa409).

Answering to the question, what benefits could be generated for their organisation by participating in the CLL (Q10, 37 responses), networking (16) responses) was the dominating answer. Nine individuals named topic related insights, e.g. updates on the sector, understanding of complexity of the problem, for urban planning, digitalisation or climate neutrality. Refreshed or increased knowledge about the SDGs, awareness on the importance to implement them and impulses and examples on how to do so were considered benefits by 5 respondents. Four participants described learning about the situation in and an enhanced

12 Question numbers according to questionnaire, cp. online annex.

connection to their region to result for their organisation.

While most of these answers were less specific, benefits relating to the own organisation were still named 12 times. The most precise response described a "contribution to improve the strategic plan of the organisation" (CLa509), two named a "reality check" (CLa104) and a "determination of [our] own position (how far are we in comparison to others)" (CLa202) as useful. While it must be stated that the remaining responded less concretely, how they might benefit from this experience: being updated about current projects and initiatives in the sector, getting more clarity about challenges to be addressed or a vision of sustainability for the own organisation were named. One response was openly critical stating, "Refreshing the SDGs, providing impulses; otherwise, to be honest, benefit for organisation [is] rather low" (CLa203).

Question 7 on ideas for follow-up activities for working with the SDGs is of special interest when reflecting the outcomes of the labs, as it was one aim of this work package to „translate the SDGs into business context. While the evaluation of the workshop itself reflects the output of the work package, activities that would be initiated and implemented to work with the SDGs can – beyond the projects outcome - reflect a possible impact.[13]

Here also some critical voices were raised (9 responses), which was coming from different regions (VE, VI, and ST), however most critical perspectives were raised by VI participants. It was criticised (by 2) that before starting activities to implement the SDGs, at first the SDGs would need to be translated more detailed to the region (or company) at stake, also asking for a more detailed analysis of the causes (instead of looking merely at the effect). Two participants explained that they see the concept of sustainability instead of the SDGs as the more significant one, and another explained that in the labs the reference of results to the SDGs could have been analysed more profoundly.

Concrete ideas were mostly around organising further events and activities to raise awareness for the SDGs in the sector (9), e.g. by organising discussions, involving the general population more, developing best practice communication documents, or even to repeat the lab. Other named fields they want to apply the SDGs to, but generally, without very refined activities; those included e.g. climate neutrality, connection to digitalisation, food waste, building community gardens, or working with disadvantaged communities in the own city.

Beyond this, several (6 individuals) reported they want to continue networking and stay in exchange with other participants or in general diverse stakeholders of the sector. This is interesting, as the approach of the SDGs Co-Learning Labs, to foster learning and exchange of perspectives by bringing together very different stakeholders seems to get a positive resonance with those participants.

To conclude, by the time of the evaluation it still remains open, which exact impact CLLs can have. While several participants leave the CLLs with critical remarks about the applicability of the SDGs in detail, a general awareness for the need to realize sustainability or SDG-related activities in the sector is reflected in the responses, and several ideas arose for further exchange and awareness raising activities.

5.3.2. ANALYSIS OF SDGS CO-LEARNING LABS FACILITATOR EVALUATION

As introduced in chapter 3, the evaluation of CLL facilitators learning journey is composed of the analysis of the questionnaire to CLL facilitators and of the focus group. Its aim is to complement the perspective of CLL participants from the different regions and to evaluate which learning environments and methods are considered

13 The question received 34 responses (out of 49 valid questionnaires), with 8 answering "no/ not in the moment" and 3 responding "yes" without further explanation provided, hence 23 responses remaining.

promising to initiate co-learning and evoke joint activities among different stakeholders to implement the SDGs in the agribusiness and food production sector.

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

The questionnaires for CLLs were in large part similar to those for ILs, with some adjustments made. In the questionnaire after all workshops, questions on the innovation process, which were asked to IL facilitators (Q14-14.2) were excluded and the questions on the diversity of participants interaction, their engagement, and the knowledge exchange and discussion among them (Q5.2-Q8) should be given higher attention in the evaluation of CLL facilitators' learning journey. The questionnaire included in total 21 questions, with eight open questions (cp. online annex). Responses were submitted by n= 9 facilitators from all project regions. Most significant of these questions were analysed qualitatively to complement insights from quantitative analysis.

As table 12 illustrates, quantitative analysis showed that according to the facilitators' point of view, the "workshop organisation", "the online tool" and "clarifications" were well received. The open question of the online tool used and possible points for improvement (Q3.3, 5.3) show that all facilitators go along overall well with the new online environment and considered the video conference and supporting communication tools as well as their distributed responsibilities for these good, but all responses for improvement

Workshop Organisation				
Organisation	Duration	How WS took place	Online tool	Clarifications and online tool
4 (3-4)	3 (2-3)	1 (1-1)	4 (3-4)	4 (2-4)
Engagement of participants and knowledge exchange				
Group size WS1	Group size WS2	Participants engagement	Diversity of participants	Knowledge exchange
3 (3-3)	3 (2-3)	4 (3-4)	3 (2-3)	3 (3-4)
Discussion among participants				
Suiting to the questions	Relevant for the topic	Interesting to other participants	Stimulating new ideas	Pointing to further relevant questions
3 (3-4)	4 (3-4)	3 (3-4)	3 (3-4)	3 (2-4)
Methods used in the WS				
Methods applied	Material used	Technical equipment	Questions asked	Time management
4 (3-4)	4 (3-4)	4 (3-4)	3 (3-4)	3 (3-4)
Quality of ideas	Approach to the SDGs	Satisfied with the approach	Impact in participants' vision of the SDGs	
3 (3-4)	4 (2-4)	4 (3-4)	3 (1-4)	
Team organisation				
Coordination tasks			Own contribution	
4 (3-4)			4 (3-4)	

Table 12: Summary of results of questionnaires provided by CLL facilitators from all regions, presented as mean values. Minimum and maximum values observed are displayed in parentheses.

wished for workshops in person to create greater outcomes.

The engagement of participants and thus knowledge exchange among participants was seen as either good or improvements can be made. The discussion among the participants was much "suited to the questions asked", also very "relevant for the topic" and much "interesting to other participants", "stimulating new ideas" and "pointing to further relevant questions".

Asked for what they considered most remarkable about the exchange and discussion between participants (Q8, 9 responses), several facilitators (4) explained the effect of the methods applied in their CLL and the participants' perception of it, being high engagement in discussion about SDGs implementation, bringing together players with different perspectives contributing to the same objective or engaging in different scenarios: "The use of unfrequently used methodologies, namely the world café method and "someone else's' shoes' [...] also engaged the participants to sustainability issues, some of which they were not used to deal with." (CLF036) As an outcome in one CLL all participants asked to schedule a further meeting for further cooperation, which was considered as very promising. (CLF014). Most (6 of 9) mentioned the openness to new perspectives and insights as remarkable, and three referred to ideas for innovative approaches which arose. Yet also, a critical remark saw nothing outstanding to arise from the lab.

Among facilitators, there was overall satisfaction with the methods used in the workshop. The aspects of "questions asked", "time management", "quality of ideas" and impact in participants' vision of the SDGs can be improved.

As already outlined in 4.3.2, the query for a suited approach to the SDGs was at the core of this work package, making the following insights particularly interesting. The survey shows (Q11) that all but one CLL chose to work with the SDGs in an integrative way; the facilitators of the one lab explained that they had focused on selected SDGs, namely SDG 6 'Clean water and Sanitation', SDG 8 'Decent work and economic growth', and SDG 17 'Partnership for the Goals', looking in particular at water shortages, working conditions and partnership (CLF014). There was overall a high satisfaction with either approach chosen, but one considered it only moderately satisfactory. This was further explained (Q11.2) by two facilitators, by their professional conviction that workshops need to refer to SDGs in a holistic, interlinked way. One lab aimed to provide this holistic perspective by an introductory video on all SDGs and by having participants reflect on their relevance for personal, professional life and for their city; also individual as "ambassadors" were assigned single goal throughout the lab. However, it was also contested that it was difficult to explain all goals within limited time, and that the aim of one lab to work on a hand-on task made it to some extent difficult to likewise integrate the SDGs in a holistic way at all points of the labs.

One approach discussed prior to the CLLs among facilitators was, if it is useful or even necessary to focus on a specific sustainability issue – related to the SDGs – in order to make the goals tangible and to allow different stakeholders to get into a process of co-learning and eventually collaboration. Also, it was open if participants or facilitators should chose those topics. Answers (Q12, 9 responses) reflect well the diversity of approaches facilitators found to deal with this option. One lab focussed on water shortage, working conditions and partnership (in accord with the SDGs selected, as described above and chosen by facilitators). Another lab, which cooperated with the local food council (a civil society organisation) for the CLL (and which assigned the "SDGs ambassadors" as described above) had as a hands-on task the aim to design a "food hub" for their city (chosen by facilitators and the organisation). Two labs focussed the sustainability challenges of the region found in WP1 ("namely water scarcity, climate change and extreme weather events, lack of qualified labour force, gender inequalities mainly

in the production sector", CLF036), while one consequently added working on individual participants' i.e. organisations' sustainability challenges and how to overcome them. The fifth lab set regional topics, identified jointly in the first workshop, into focus and then as well shifted as well over to organisations' challenges related to these and how to overcome them. In total, in three labs facilitators chose the topics, in two labs the participants, while facilitators were overall highly satisfied with their approaches chosen.

RESULTS OF FOCUS GROUP ANALYSIS

The focus group allowed to enquire specific aspects of facilitators' learning journey in more depth, beyond the questionnaire and to bring together experience made in the different regions' CLLs. As the first part of the focus group addressed the learning journey of facilitators of both lab formats, facilitators' answers with regard to their most remarkable insights during facilitation, the approach to the SDG chosen and outcomes of the labs are described in chp. 4.3.2., and should also be considered for the facilitators learning journey with CLLs.

Approach to Co-Learning

In the dedicated small group discussion on the CLLs, the six participating facilitators were first asked to reflect on how Co-Learning was approached and initiated. While several facilitators found it difficult to determine whether co-learning was taking place or not, one explained that exchanging views and ideas is a type of co-creation, and another gave examples of situations when co-creation occurred: in break-out groups where participants were asked to discuss and agree common challenges and also in feedback rounds where participants were asked to observe, listen to and provide feedback on others' ideas. Another facilitator said that they sought to stimulate co-creation by using heterogeneous groups of participants from different organisations and backgrounds and by establishing smaller groups for discussion. Facilitators were then asked to consider whether they had observed competition or conflict among participants. Here, two facilitators pointed to the need for the facilitator to being aware of and tackle different group dynamics by letting all speak and not letting a few persons take over the discussion, even where the group was diverse. This requires flexibility on the part of facilitators.

Expected short- and long-term impact of SDGs Co-Learning Labs

The short- and long-term impacts anticipated by the facilitators ranged from the provision of a space for networking and the development of shared views and ideas to more concrete actions and initiatives (the creation of a food hub, partnerships, projects and regional development plans) to a broader understanding and awareness of the SDGs. In response to the final question on the most important lesson they had learned from the labs about promoting Co-Learning, facilitators referred to the challenges but also to the skills they learned as facilitators in an online learning environment and noted that they learned a lot about how co-learning takes place among a wide range of diverse stakeholders.

On the question of what they would do differently, comments from CLL facilitators mainly related to the time required, and the need for preparatory meetings with participants to better understand their needs and level of knowledge of the SDGs, and to ensure that methodologies were adapted as necessary.

5.4. INTERIM CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, the CLLs provided a space for exchange and mutual learning, as they brought together stakeholders from different parts of the sector that would otherwise not usually meet. While possibly appearing as an obvious effect when bringing together a diverse stakeholder group, analysis shows it is important to create an

atmosphere of openness, curiosity for other perspectives and underline relevance and potential outcomes of such mutual learning spaces.

Hence, learning points applicable to all stakeholders and facilitators were that it is important to be open to new and different perspectives, and to change your perspective (for example, this implies being open to working on solutions to shared challenges, even though one stakeholder does not give them priority). Evaluations show that the methods applied in the different labs – despite differing – where named as a highlight by many participants.

An insight regarding the question on how to approach the SDGs shows, comparably to the experience from ILs, that the focus on selected SDGs or an integrative approach can bring about good learning experience: four labs chose an integrative approach and facilitators of one lab selected three SDGs (6, 8, 17) in advance, while, of course, all SDGs and their interlinkage were introduced in this lab, too. Likewise, labs that did not set specific SDGs into focus, also saw the need to bring about a practical component, in order to reach the aim to translate the SDGs into business and sector context, and hence worked either on sustainability challenges of participants or as in one lab gave a specific common task to develop, against the background of the SDGs.

While long-term impacts of CLLs cannot yet be assessed at the time of the evaluation, at least in two regions facilitators anticipated further cooperation to continue ideas for joint activities of the lab participants.

For practical relevance, it is generally recommended that a check be undertaken of expectations and that participants are given the chance to openly express the level of their interest in learning, by using a questionnaire, for instance. Even though the questionnaire to participants before the start of the CLL did not generally provide any major unexpected insights, it provided facilitators with useful information on participants' expectations and prior knowledge.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This work package intended to enable and support SDG-based innovation and transformation in the agribusiness and food production sector and implemented formats for collaborative learning between companies, HEIs and further stakeholders. Thereby, it was a major work package for implementing the SDGs Labs – Making the SDGs Our Business project.

When the concept of SDGs Innovation and Co-Learning Labs was being developed and workshops were being designed, consideration was given to the potential challenge of how to work with the abstract and global goals represented by the SDGs (e.g. experience from WP1), as facilitators expected participants to find it quite difficult to work with them. However, by using different methods that were adapted to participants' knowledge about and experience with the SDGs, and by identifying suitable approaches to enable participants to relate to these goals (including visionary aspects, emotional components, value-based reflections on the one hand, and analytical, fact-based reflections on the other), the implementation of the labs shows that overall participants were already well equipped to work with the SDGs and translate them into their specific working environments.

Overall, the learning journey – as reflected in the evaluation – shows that the labs designed and carried out in all project regions provided the participants with the required learning space to reflect their own and their organisation's sustainability activities. Moreover, the labs gave impulses to develop already established (business) activities further by translating the SDGs into practice. Mutual learning was enabled by opening up spaces beyond usual working environments, e.g. by asking participants to change perspectives (Someone else's shoes method), by working with future scenarios, or simply by creating teams or working on tasks other than usual. Through the methods applied and the facilitated discussions among the different participants, impulses to innovate could be stimulated, and processes to develop further in that direction were at least initiated. Facilitators' evaluation of both lab formats also showed, that there is not one preferred approach to the SDGs for all labs, but that approaches need to adapted in accordance to the participants' background, pre-knowledge, team composition, as well as the specific aims and envisioned outcomes of individual labs.

In ILs, the approaches chosen to address and work with the SDGs differed. IL Facilitators developed a variety of approaches to working with the global goals, by working with selected SDGs or with all the goals in an integrative way, by generating ideas for concrete projects or helping companies to undertake broader analysis for potential future activities. Yet, all facilitators were (very) satisfied with their approaches. Likewise, the methods applied in ILs to address innovation and the SDGs varied highly, ranging from working on a concrete task (e.g. a sustainable online platform), using the approach of "dreaming - doing - reflecting" to focusing on selected SDGs and developing an assessment tool to working with

topics selected by participants after a broader introduction to the SDGs.

How IL participants will integrate their insights from participating in the lab in their organisation, and if the reflection started in an IL eventually leads to changes, is, however, beyond the influence of a workshop series of several days and lies in the hands of the participating companies and organisations.

Stakeholders from different organisations and different parts of the sector came together in CLLs, which provided a space for exchange and mutual learning among these participants. It is important, to support mutual learning by creating an atmosphere of openness, curiosity for other perspectives and underline the relevance and potential outcomes during workshops, as the analysis of CLL underlines. Likewise, an attitude of openness to change one's perspectives is required by all stakeholders and facilitators. Evaluations show that the methods applied in the different labs – despite differing – were named as a highlight by many participants.

The approach to the SDGs in CLLs differed, as in ILs, too. The learning journey shows that the focus on selected SDGs or an integrative approach can bring about a good learning experience. When working with selected SDGs, it is of course nevertheless important to firstly introduce all SDGs and their interconnections. Yet, bringing in a practical component is required in order to reach the aim to translate the SDGs into a business and sector-related context. This was realised either by working on sustainability challenges of participants, or by designing a specific common task related to the SDGs.

Regarding CLL outcomes, as for ILs, short- or long-term impacts can only be anticipated, but in at least two pilot regions, a starting point for further cooperation to work along the SDGs in the agribusiness and food production sector is likely to have been set.

6.1. IMPLICATIONS FOR WP 5 'SDGS ACADEMIES'

The focus group of IL and CLL facilitators brought up several aspects, especially with regard to requirements of methods for labs that are of interest for the remaining work in the project in work package 5 'SDGs Academies' that intends to provide further learning opportunities to work with the SDGs.

One important characteristic to address the SDGs found by IL facilitators is the emotional component of learning material. Material can profit from including emotional aspects when working with the global goals (e.g. personal stories about experiences and insights) as a source of inspiration and to refrain from being too abstract.

It is an important learning that a balance needs to be achieved between two major concerns in order to make the SDGs tangible. These are, on the one hand, discussions about sustainability challenges and the common search for possible solutions framed in light of the SDGs as interlinked challenges with global components, and on the other hand, having sufficient time for initiating concrete steps to take action in an organisation's or an individual's day-to-day work.

The CLLs especially underlined the importance of openness to change one's perspectives, which is required by all participants to allow mutual learning as well as by facilitators, to adapt to unforeseen changes within the labs.

6.2. LEARNING POINTS FOR DIFFERENT TARGET GROUPS

This work package developed different SDGs laboratories as learning spaces to target different groups such as start-ups and companies from the agribusiness and food production sector as well as HEI stakeholders. The report aims to provide guidance for these different groups. The following learning points appear crucial from the learning journeys reflected above. Conclusions can

be drawn at different levels, regarding the target groups, as participants or as facilitators, or with regard to the aim of the labs, on how to translate the SDGs to a specific sector, and on how to initiative co-learning and innovation.

START-UPS/ COMPANIES

One conclusion is relevant both for start-ups and for businesses when working with the SDGs: Actions that relate to the SDGs have often already been taken in businesses, but were not intentionally based on the global goals. Cross-checking the performance of the own business against the SDGs framework can therefore help improving the understanding of the organisation's sustainability performance. At the same time, individual SDGs are often considered already addressed (and have been 'ticked off') but might not have been considered thoroughly. Working with the SDGs in a more detailed manner and taking a closer look at the associated targets can therefore serve as an eye-opener and lead to new potential fields of action that have not (yet) been tackled.

Another learning point for start-ups and companies is that is important to split-up the usually cooperating team members to allow gaining new perspectives and learning new insights, as a basis for mutual learning. Another conclusion is the importance of comparing the status quo (Where are we now in terms of sustainability or implementing the SDGs?) and a future vision (What do we want to achieve?), followed as a consequent step by asking: How do we get from our status quo to our future vision? A reflection on the work already done and which improvement could be strived for (What else could be done in the company for achieving the SDGs or sustainability?) could be carried out. Questioning current activities and aims is important in order to be able to leave routines and innovate the sustainability process.

More detailed reflection on previously completed sustainability initiatives within the company or start-up can potentially lead to companies realising that their current measures are outdated and need to be rethought or redesigned. (Does it still make sense? What else could be done?). One more important conclusion is that it is necessary to learn from solutions that are already existing, i.e. to get inspired from other start-ups, companies or also initiatives and adapt them to the own organisation's context.

HEIS

Conclusions from the SDGs laboratories for Higher Education Institutions are to break up hierarchies among students and teachers, to recognise that there are no wrong answers, that crazy ideas are allowed and welcome, and to think outside of the box by mixing students from different classes and disciplines when working on the SDGs and finding sustainable solutions.

When cooperating as an HEI with a single company or start-up (like in ILs), specifics of the company and their context need to be known by HEI stakeholders, as these are important for the joint work (i.e. a clarification of the situation of the company, their current activities and challenges as well as the aims or motivation connect to the participation in a lab are important). In groups with various stakeholders, like in CLLs, it is important to give sufficient room for participants presenting themselves, and the challenges and motivation of their organisation related to the lab or learning space. Also in discussions and group work phases there needs to be sufficient time and concrete tasks or questions, to allow participants to benefit from the participation in the event.

A final point must be made regarding working with the SDGs for HEIs. Although HEIs are used to working with abstract questions and terms, it cannot be emphasised often enough, that it is important to leave the level of the abstract goals and to ensure that their educational formats, such as labs, connect to concrete questions and tangible activities.

SDGs Labs
Making the SDGs our business

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SDGs Labs
Making the SDGs our business

8. ANNEX

8.1. COMPANY PROFILES SDGS INNOVATION LABS

Innovation Lab - Vienna

Company	start-up / vegan restaurant and food provider
Company size	26 employees from different worldwide locations
Type of organisation	☒ Company ☐ Cooperative ☐ Association ☐ NGO
Subsector, Stage(s) of the value chain	☐ Farming or primary production ☐ Feed stuff production and other suppliers ☐ Processing industry ☐ Distribution ☐ Retail ☒ Services (tourism, gastronomy,…) ☐ Politics and public administration ☐ NGO or interest group Specification: restaurant
Brief description of the company's main business activities	Healthy, vegan, fresh and organic restaurant chain with daily changing lunch menus, Slow Food served Fast in 5 restaurants in Vienna and surrondings (under Covid-19 restrictions (May 2021) severed in 5 Lunch Takeway Locations). Moreover, running an online shop to sell several products (e.g. chutneys, curry pastes and their own cook book); on top, several events are offered (e.g. cooking sessions, yoga breakfast events).
Experience of the company / organisation with sustainability (and if suitable with the SDGs)	Very elaborate sustainability concepts: • Sustainability report 2019 • List of suppliers • Recyclable packaging • Support to charitable events and initiatives • Very close networking with the Viennese (business) sustainability scene -> several joint events in pre-covid times, but also during the pandemic (shifted to online events)
What was a focus of the work with this company in the Innovation Lab?	The focus was to start planning a community platform the company wants to build for its customers: A comprehensive platform with recipes, events, workshops – a place to engage and involve their customers in a common space. Furthermore, the company's current sustainability performance was checked (using the SDGs as point of reference), as well as future ambitions (vision for 2025) worked on and translated in concrete actions for 2021 and 2022.

Innovation Lab - Vechta

Company	poultry specialties producing and marketing company group
Company size	Ab. 7000 employees in the company group of
Type of organisation	☒ Company ☐ Cooperative ☐ Association ☐ NGO
Subsector, Stage(s) of the value chain	☒ Farming or primary production ☒ Feed stuff production and other suppliers ☒ Processing industry ☒ Distribution ☒ Retail ☐ Services (tourism, gastronomy,…) ☐ Politics and public administration ☐ NGO or interest group Specification: poultry meat specialties and alternative protein products.
Brief description of the company's main business activities	poultry meat production (all stages in the value chain covered in the company group, including feed stuff, animal health, poultry breeding and farming, slaughtering and meat processing, distribution and marketing), in addition vegan alternatives protein products are established.
Experience of the company / organisation with sustainability (and if suitable with the SDGs)	Sustainability Certification since 2009 including a comprehensive sustainability process with a sustainability board involving the group' board and sustainability teams in production sites to identify and implement specific sustainability needs; sustainability report published in 2017 and 2019, the latter referring to the SDGs.
What was a focus of the work with this company in the Innovation Lab?	While sustainability is recognized as an important topic at company board level and in specific sustainability teams in production sites, not all employees in all departments of the group are equally aware of how its relevance for the own working environment. Apprentices from different parts of the company group (mostly from administration and management, as well as IT, and sales teams) targeted as participants in this IL, as they as young professionals will in the future be responsible to implement projects in different departments of the company/ group. The aim of this IL was to enable young employees to develop and (in the aftermath of the lab) implement own sustainability projects that support the implementation of the SDGs.

Innovation Lab - South Tyrol

Company	family run hotel
Company size	40
Type of organisation	☒ Company ☐ Cooperative ☐ Association ☐ NGO
Subsector, Stage(s) of the value chain	☐ Farming or primary production ☐ Feed stuff production and other suppliers ☐ Processing industry ☐ Distribution ☐ Retail ☒ Services (tourism, gastronomy,…) ☐ Politics and public administration ☐ NGO or interest group Specification: Hotel

Brief description of the company's main business activities	• Nature hotel in a quiet, nature related alpine environment • Organic and local food • Natural spa and natural cosmetics • Guided hikes
Experience of the company / organisation with sustainability (and if suitable with the SDGs)	• Many years of experience with sustainability • Organic and local food • 100% sustainable energy • Certification as nature hotel • ECG (Economy of the Common Good) balance sheet • Partner of the Hiking Hotels
What was a focus of the work with this company in the Innovation Lab?	• Introduce into and create common awareness for the SDGs • Create and foster innovations, which were derived from the SDGs

Innovation Lab – North Portugal

Company	olive-oil producing company
Company size	9 employees
Type of organisation	☒ Company ☐ Cooperative ☐ Association ☐ NGO
Subsector, Stage(s) of the value chain	☒ Farming or primary production ☒ Feed stuff production and other suppliers ☒ Processing industry ☒ Distribution ☐ Retail ☐ Services (tourism, gastronomy,…) ☐ Politics and public administration ☐ NGO or interest group Specification: Production, processing of olives and their selling and distribution.
Brief description of the company's main business activities	The company is dedicated to the production and bottling of Olive Oil from the Douro and Trás-os-Montes Region. With award winning, dynamic and ambitious projects, where the olive oil is processed cold with innovative techniques always striving for quality.
Experience of the company / organisation with sustainability (and if suitable with the SDGs)	All the experiences with the SDGs are informal, i.e., they applied them without having any formal notion that they were doing it.
What was a focus of the work with this company in the Innovation Lab?	Making the team of the company aware of the SDGs and goals, so that they could formalize the good practices they already had. The aim of the Innovation Lab was to enable participants to get a notion of measures to enhance the implementation of the SDGs, namely through the creation of a sustainability report.

Innovation Lab – South Portugal

Company	Local Farmers' Cooperative for support and services
Company size	50 employees, including 3 agricultural engineers
Type of organisation	☐ Company ☒ Cooperative ☐ Association ☐ NGO

Subsector, Stage(s) of the value chain	☒ Farming or primary production ☒ Feed stuff production and other suppliers ☐ Processing industry ☐ Distribution ☒ Retail ☐ Services (tourism, gastronomy,…) ☐ Politics and public administration ☐ NGO or interest group Specification: specialized training, accounting office
Brief description of the company's main business activities	The agriculture cooperative is an enterprise with cooperative status and provides their members production means (in 8 shops), technical support, specialised training, renting of agrarian machines and other services.
Experience of the company / organisation with sustainability (and if suitable with the SDGs)	The cooperative aims at making a better dissemination of the SDGs to stimulate innovations in the local enterprises.
What was a focus of the work with this company in the Innovation Lab?	Introducing innovations in the association's organisation aiming at a better dissemination of the SDGs to stimulate innovations in the local enterprises. Develop a tool together with the cooperative to assess the sustainability of the application of new technologies. To develop and implement in a group work exercise a tool to assess a practical case - the introduction of microorganisms in agricultural crops - and compare it with conventional practices used. At the end, the participants linked the contribution of the SDGs to the new technology implemented.

8.2. EXAMPLE OF A WORKSHOP DESIGN OF SDGS INNOVATION LABS

Innovation Lab in Oldenburg Münsterland / Vechta, University of Vechta

Agenda

Workshop 1, 27.01.2021

Venue: Online (BigBlueButton)

No.	Agenda and Content	Aim	Tools / Materials	Time
1	Dial up & Arrive	First impressions, overview on participants and facilitators		13:15
2	Welcome and introduction • Presentation of the SDGs Labs project	Welcoming; Getting to know aims of the lab and of the day, as well as background of the project	Presentation: Agenda	13:30 – 13:40
3	Round of introductions of all participants	Getting to know each other of all participants and facilitators	Guiding questions for presentation on PPT, participants hand over word to a next person	13:40 – 13:50
4	Presentation Global Change & Sustainability	Introduction to the topic, input on thematic background of the lab	PPT Discussion in padlet Ecological footprint results of the TN;	13:50 – 14:50
5	Pause - Switch to BigBlueButton			14:50 – 15:00

No.	Agenda and Content	Aim	Tools / Materials	Time
6	SDGs	Serve as an occasion to look at sustainability challenges in the sector and come up with innovative project ideas.	BBB Random group assignment by BBB Method Random SDGs	15:00 – 15:20
7	Break - change back to teams			15:20 – 15:30
8	Presentation of sustainability activities of WIESENHOF & PHW Group	Give deeper insights into the sustainability activities and aims of the Wiesenhof & PHW Group		15:30 – 16:00
9	Presentation of ideas competition, first brainstorming session	Collect spontaneous ideas and approaches, Stimulate creative thinking and developing own ideas		16:00 – 16:40
10	Formation of groups & explanation of the task between the workshops.	Clarification of the tasks for the time between the workshops		16:40 – 16:45
11	Take screenshot / group picture			
12	Evaluation (google survey)	Anonymous feedback		16:45 – 16:50
13	Time buffer			16:50 – 17:15
14	End of the workshop			Latest: 17:15

Workshop 2, 05.02.21

Venue: BigBlueButton

No.	Agenda and Content	Aim	Tools / Materials	Time
1	Welcome, Wrap-up of the topics from WS 1 Agenda	Introduction Overview on outcomes of last workshop, orientation	BBB	12:30
2	Presentation of the ideas of the 4 small groups by participants - 10 min per group - 5 min Feedback by the team of the PHW group, reference to any projects already implemented and relevant company documents - 5 min feedback by the team of the University of Vechta (for 4 groups = 1h 20 in total) Meanwhile: Jot down ideas in Google Doc for selection of group topics.	Insight into ideas of working groups, feedback as guidance and for additional information	Shared screen by participants	12:35 – 13:55
3	Break (10 min)			13:55

No.	Agenda and Content	Aim	Tools / Materials	Time
4	Utopia exercise	Supporting creativity, opening space for broader ideas for change.	BBB Shared notes	13:50 – 14:50
5	Selection of group topics Allocation of points, followed by discussion in breakout rooms within the groups, for agreement 1 person from us per group - 10 min	Identification of actual group projects	Points award / Google doc	14:10 – 14:20
6	3 steps for concretizing and planning the implementation of the project ideas - Concretization: “Problem or opportunity?”, and relevant business areas - Definition of “long-term goal - Formulation of “strategy” or building blocks of the project Explanation of tasks for the 3 steps	Input	Presentation (Uni Vechta team)	14:20 – 14:30
7	Work in the 4 small groups on the 3 steps - each approx. 15 min, - Uni Vechta team checks in between in the group rooms: - answer questions - after 15 min change to next step	Application of input to group projects	BBB & 4 breakout rooms & google docs per group	14:30 – 15:15
8	Break 5 min		Google docs per group with tasks	15:15 – 15:20
9	Explanation of the task for the next workshop (10 min) - Elaboration of the 3 steps	Clarification of next tasks		15:20 – 15:30
10	Feedback round (15 min)	Feedback, getting insight into experience of all participants	Flash light method or 5-finger method	15:30
11	Group picture			
12	Evaluation (google survey)	Anonymous feedback		16:45 – 16:50
13	End of the workshop			15:45

Workshop 3, 12.02.21

Venue: BigBlueButton

No.	Agenda and Content	Aim	Tools / Materials	Time
1	Welcome Presentation of today’s agenda	Overview	BBB	12:30

No.	Agenda and Content	Aim	Tools / Materials	Time
2	Presentation of the developed tasks by the 4 small groups of participants (10 min per group, 40 min) Afterwards: Feedback in breakout rooms with mutual feedback. Feedback by the University of Vechta and the PHW group team further steps for project planning Notes on the project presentation outlook Feedback round	Presentation of results of group work, overview on the process of all groups, identification of ideas and possible difficulties	Shared screen by participants	12:35 – 13:55
3	Mutual feedback of the groups in breakout rooms (2x2 groups) 7 min per group, total 15min	mutual feedback by participants,		13:15 – 13:30
4	At the end, 1 person from each team (PHW group and university) joins the breakout rooms and gives further feedback. (additional 10 min per group, = 20 min)	Feedback and guiding advice by University and company teams.		13:30 – 13:50
5	Break 10 min			13:50 – 14:00
6	Further steps of project planning - Task planning - Resources (time and personnel) - SDGs reference, if applicable - Name (and slogan, if applicable)	Input, explanation of next steps	PPT	14:00 – 14:10
7	Revision within each group (25 min)	Application of previously explained next steps to group projects		14:10 – 14:35
8	Presentation by each group: - What were the top 3 striking challenges, - How can you deal with them? (5 min per group) (20 min)	Identification of key challenges		14:35 – 14:55
9	Open questions about the 4th appointment	Clarification of open questions		14:55 – 15:05
10	Feedback round (15 min)	Feedback, insights into experience of all participants	Flash light method or 5-finger method	15:15 – 15:30
11	Group picture			
12	Farewell & end of the workshop			15:35
13	Evaluation (google forms)	Anonymous feedback		15:45

8.3. OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPANTS COMPOSITION IN CO-LEARNING LABS

Co-Learning Lab	Vienna	Vechta (Oldenburg Münsterland)	South Tyrol	North Portugal	South Portugal
Total number of participants (WS1/ WS2)	**13/13**	**7/8[1]**	**18/14**	**16/16[2]**	**10**
No. of company representatives	3/4	5	6 / 5	5 /6	2
No. of HEI / research centre representatives	3/4	1	3/2	6	1
No. representatives of local / regional politics		1/2	1/0	1	1
No. of NGO representatives	7/5		3 / 3	2	3
No. of association representatives			5/ 4	2/ 1	2
No. of consumers					1

8.4. EXAMPLE OF A WORKSHOP DESIGN CO-LEARNING LABS

SDGs Co-Learning Lab South Portugal, CEIFACoop

Agenda

Co-Learning Lab Workshop 1, 10.12.2020

Venue: Online (Zoom)

No.	Agenda and Content	Aim	Tools / Materials	Time
1	Welcome Welcoming of participants Introduction of the agenda	Welcome, orientation in the tool Overview on the workshop today	Zoom / PPT	09:00 – 09:15
2	Introduction round of participants: Icebreaker: Facilitator gives a short description of the person to be presented and the participants have to guess who the person is	Getting to know each other and everybody's relation to the topic	Zoom / PPT	09:15 – 09:30

1 2 Notkeepers from University of Vechta, in addition.
2 5/6 representatives of UTAD and RegiaDuoro Park took part as faciltators and note keepers, in addition.

No.	Agenda and Content	Aim	Tools / Materials	Time
3	Presentation of the SDGs Labs Project; presentation about the agri business sector: Presentation of project (aim of the project, project consortium; work already carried out in the project,)	Presentation of project Presentation about the agri business	Zoom / PPT	9:30 - 09:55
4	Presentation of the Labs (Innovation and Co Learning Labs)	Objectives of the Co Learning	Zoom / PPT	09:55 -10:10
5	SDGs Game	Participants read the SGDs and assess the contribution to the agro-food sector of an SDG: - Direct & Strong - Direct but Weak - Indirect but Strong - Indirect & Weak - No contribution	Zoom / PPT	10:10 – 10:25
6	Break			10:00 - 10:05
7	Work group 1 – Water (Global challenges; Regional challenges, solutions) Work group 2 – work conditions (Global challenges; Regional challenges, solutions)	Exchange in small group with mixed background	Zoom (small groups, Breakout rooms)	10:05 -10:45
8	Break			10:45 – 11:15
9	Presentation of results in plenary of each group and discussion of results		Zoom	11:15 – 12:15
10	Evaluation	Anonymous feedback	Evaluation via google forms survey	12:15- 12: 30
11	Lunch Break			12:30 – 14:00

Co-Learning Lab Workshop 2, 10.12.2020

Venue: Online (Zoom)

No.	Agenda and Content	Aim	Tools / Materials	Time
1	Welcome Welcoming of participants Introduction of the agenda	Welcome Overview on the morning workshop Reminders of outcomes of workshop 1 and updating of new participants	Zoom / PPT	14:00
2	Momentum notes for discussion	Getting to know each other and everybody's relation to the topic	Zoom / PPT	09:15 – 09:30
3	Discussion	Plenary discussion about the Innovation	Zoom	14:30 – 14:45

No.	Agenda and Content	Aim	Tools / Materials	Time
4	Break			14:45 – 15:00
5	Work group 1 – Partnerships for innovative circular economy solutions in the agrifood sector Work group 2 –Partnerships for the disposal of products from the agrifood sector at the local / national level.	Exchange in small group with mixed background Discussions of possible solutions Sharing ideias	Zoom (small groups, Breakout rooms)	15:00 -15:40
6	Break			15:40 – 15:50
7	Presentation and discussion in plenary of results of each group	Identification of starting points to build partnerships in the future for common projects	Zoom	15:50 -16:15
8	Evaluation	Anonymous feedback	Evaluation via google forms survey	16:15 - 16:30
9	Thanks for the participation, farewell		Zoom	16:45